

# Wolf Island

## *National Wildlife Refuge*

photo: USFWS



photo: Jonas Jordan



photo: Pat Metz



photo: Jonas Jordan



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Wolf Island National Wildlife Refuge is a barrier island located off the Georgia Coast. The island refuge is part of the Savannah Coastal Refuges complex which is headquartered in Savannah, Georgia.

The complex includes seven national wildlife refuges, totalling 55,942 acres, found along a 100-mile stretch of coastline in Georgia and South Carolina. The seven refuges are Pinckney Island and Tybee refuges in South Carolina; Savannah (located in both states along the Savannah River), Wassaw, Harris Neck, Blackbeard Island and Wolf Island refuges in Georgia.

### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1930 as a migratory bird sanctuary and National Wilderness Area.
- Acres: 5,126 (4,519 Wolf Island which is 4,219 acres saltmarsh; 300 acres scrub/shrub; 593 Egg Island which is 393 acres saltwater marsh, 200 acres scrub/shrub; 14 Little Egg Island which is 14 acres saltwater marsh.
- Location: McIntosh County, GA, 12 miles east of Darien, GA (by boat).

### Natural History

- 1769: Christopher DeBrake was granted title to Wolf Island by the King of England.
- 1828: (538 Wolf Island acres) was conveyed to the U.S. Government for ocean navigational purposes.
- 1972: 4,071 acres were purchased to expand the refuge. The balance of the refuge (517 acres) was added in 1972, by a Declaration of Taking.
- 1975: Wolf Island Refuge was designated as a Wilderness Area.
- Notable concentrations of waterfowl, wading/marsh birds and shorebirds.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- Managed from Harris Neck NWR.
- Public use figures are not compiled as only navigable waters are open to public use.
- Wolf Island NWR is part of a seven-refuge complex that has an annual budget of \$1,723,000 (FY 05) and a combined staff of 15, none of which are assigned to this refuge.

### Refuge Objectives

- Provide protection and habitat for migratory birds.
- Provide protection for endangered/threatened species (loggerhead sea turtle, piping plover).
- Maintain as an undisturbed National Wilderness.

### Management Tools

- Education/interpretation.
- Law enforcement.

### Public Use Opportunities

(All uplands closed to public use)

- Wildlife observation from boat only.
- Wildlife photography from boat only.
- Saltwater fishing/shellfishing.

### Calendar of Events

**October:** National Wildlife Refuge Week.

# Wolf Island National Wildlife Refuge

## Questions and Answers

*How do I get to the refuge?*

Wolf Island is only accessible by boat. The refuge is closed to the public and is managed as a bird sanctuary and wilderness area. The creeks and surrounding water are open to the public and offer saltwater fishing and wildlife observation/photography if conducted from the waterways. Information on commercial boat charters to the refuge can be obtained by calling the Savannah Coastal Refuges office at 912/652 4415.

*Why is the refuge closed to the public?*

The upland habitat consists of plant species associated with elevations only slightly above sea level. The majority of the island habitat consists of mud flats and early successional plants indicative of a dynamic dune/marsh system. The island is closed to the public because of the fragility of these plant species, the island's National Wilderness significance, and the shorebird resting/nesting associated with the limited suitable upland habitat.

*Is hunting permitted on the Island?*

No, the refuge is closed to the public.

*Are the smaller sand islands adjacent Wolf Island refuge open to the public?*

No, the small sand islands immediately adjacent the main body of Wolf Island refuge are also a part of the refuge, and are closed for the same reason as the main island.

*Are the creeks that transverse through the marshlands of Wolf Island open to the public?*

Yes, the waterways through and around Wolf Island Refuge are open to boat traffic and any associated wildlife and saltwater fishing recreational opportunities.